

Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000

[Page 114 STAT. 2763 Page 114, (U.S. Statutes at Large, page 114 ff.), Public Law 106-554]
Signed into Law December 21, 2000
as Amended November 6, 2001

AN ACT

To establish the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The areas of northwestern Nevada known as the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon contain and surround the last nationally significant, untouched segments of the historic California emigrant Trails, including wagon ruts, historic inscriptions, and a wilderness landscape largely unchanged since the days of the pioneers.

(2) The relative absence of development in the Black Rock Desert and high Rock Canyon areas from emigrant times to the present day offers a unique opportunity to capture the terrain, sights, and conditions of the overland trails as they were experienced by the emigrants and to make available to both present and future generations of Americans the opportunity of experiencing emigrant conditions in an unaltered setting.

(3) The Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon areas are unique segments of the Northern Great Basin and contain broad representation of the Great Basin's land forms and plant and animal species, including golden eagles and other birds of prey, sage grouse, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, free roaming horses and burros, threatened fish and sensitive plants.

(4) The Black Rock-High Rock region contains a number of cultural and natural resources that have been declared eligible for National Historic Landmark and Natural Landmark status, including a portion of the 1843-44 John Charles Fremont exploration route, the site of the death of Peter Lassen, early military facilities, and examples of early homesteading and mining.

(5) The archeological, paleontological, and geographical resources of the Black Rock-High Rock region include numerous prehistoric and historic Native American sites, woolly mammoth sites, some of the largest natural potholes of North America, and a remnant dry Pleistocene lakebed (playa) where the curvature of the Earth may be observed.

(6) The two large wilderness mosaics that frame the conservation area offer exceptional opportunities for solitude and serve to protect the integrity of the viewshed of the historic emigrant trails.

(7) Public lands in the conservation area have been used for domestic livestock grazing for over a century, with resultant benefits to community stability and contributions to the local and State economies. It has not been demonstrated that continuation of this use would be incompatible with appropriate protection and sound management of the resource values of these lands; therefore, it is expected that such grazing will continue in accordance with the management plan for the conservation area and other applicable laws and regulations.

(8) The Black Rock Desert playa is a unique natural resource that serves as the primary destination for the majority of visitors to the conservation area, including visitors associated with large-scale permitted events. It is

expected that such permitted events will continue to be administered in accordance with the management plan for the conservation area and other applicable laws and regulations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act:

(1) The term `Secretary' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) The term `public lands' has the meaning stated in section 103(e) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702(e)).

(3) The term `conservation area' means the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area established pursuant to section 4 of this Act.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSES- In order to conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the unique and nationally important historical, cultural, paleontological, scenic, scientific, biological, educational, wildlife, riparian, wilderness, endangered species, and recreational values and resources associated with the Applegate-Lassen and Nobles Trails corridors and surrounding areas, there is hereby established the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area in the State of Nevada.

(b) AREAS INCLUDED- The conservation area shall consist of approximately 797,100 acres of public lands as generally depicted on the map entitled `Black Rock Desert Emigrant Trail National Conservation Area' and dated October 3, 2001.

(c) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION- As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a map and legal description of the conservation area. The map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in such map and legal description. Copies of the map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Bureau of Land Management.

SEC. 5. MANAGEMENT.

(a) MANAGEMENT- The Secretary, acting through the Bureau of Land Management, shall manage the conservation area in a manner that conserves, protects and enhances its resources and values, including those resources and values specified in subsection 4(a), in accordance with this Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), and other applicable provisions of law.

(b) Access-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall maintain adequate access for the reasonable use and enjoyment of the conservation area.

(2) PRIVATE LAND- The Secretary shall provide reasonable access to privately owned land or interests in land within the boundaries of the conservation area.

(3) EXISTING PUBLIC ROADS- The Secretary is authorized to maintain existing public access within the boundaries of the conservation area in a manner consistent with the purposes for which the conservation area was established.

(c) Uses-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall only allow such uses of the conservation area as the Secretary finds will further the purposes for which the conservation area is established.

(2) OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE- Except where needed for administrative purposes or to respond to an emergency, use of motorized vehicles in the conservation area shall be permitted only on roads and trails and in other areas designated for use of motorized vehicles as part of the management plan prepared pursuant to subsection (e).

(3) PERMITTED EVENTS- The Secretary may continue to permit large-scale events in defined, low impact areas of the Black Rock Desert playa in the conservation area in accordance with the management plan prepared pursuant to subsection (e).

(d) HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING- Nothing in this Act shall be deemed to diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada with respect to fish and wildlife management, including regulation of hunting and fishing, on public lands within the conservation area.

(e) MANAGEMENT PLAN- Within three years following the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a comprehensive resource management plan for the long-term protection and management of the conservation area. The plan shall be developed with full public participation and shall describe the appropriate uses and management of the conservation area consistent with the provisions of this Act. The plan may incorporate appropriate decisions contained in any current management or activity plan for the area and may use information developed in previous studies of the lands within or adjacent to the conservation area.

(f) GRAZING- Where the Secretary of the Interior currently permits livestock grazing in the conservation area, such grazing shall be allowed to continue subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders.

(g) VISITOR SERVICE FACILITIES- The Secretary is authorized to establish, in cooperation with other public or private entities as the Secretary may deem appropriate, visitor service facilities for the purpose of providing information about the historical, cultural, ecological, recreational, and other resources of the conservation area.

(h) ROAD MAINTENANCE- Within the conservation area the Secretary may permit the use of gravel pits for the maintenance of roads within the Materials Act of 1947 (30 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) to the extent consistent with this Act and subject to such regulations, policies, and practices as the Secretary considers necessary.

SEC. 6. WITHDRAWAL.

(a) IN GENERAL- Subject to valid existing rights, all Federal lands within the conservation area and all lands and interests therein which are hereafter acquired by the United States are hereby withdrawn from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws, from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, from operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws and from the minerals materials laws and all amendments thereto.

SEC. 7. NO BUFFER ZONES.

The Congress does not intend for the establishment of the conservation area to lead to the creation of protective perimeters or buffer zones around the conservation area. The fact that there may be activities or uses on lands outside the conservation area that would not be permitted in the conservation area shall not preclude such activities or uses on such lands up to the boundary of the conservation area consistent with other applicable laws.

SEC. 8. WILDERNESS.

(a) DESIGNATION- In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following lands in the State of Nevada are designated as wilderness, and, therefore, as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Certain lands in the Black Rock Desert Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 315,700 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `Black Rock Desert Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the Black Rock Desert Wilderness.

(2) Certain lands in the Pahute Peak Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 57,400 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `Pahute Peak Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the Pahute Peak Wilderness.

(3) Certain lands in the North Black Rock Range Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 30,800 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `North Black Rock Range Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the North Black Rock Range Wilderness.

(4) Certain lands in the East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 52,800 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness.

(5) Certain lands in the High Rock Lake Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 59,300 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `High Rock Lake Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the High Rock Lake Wilderness.

(6) Certain lands in the Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 48,700 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness.

(7) Certain lands in the High Rock Canyon Wilderness Study Area and Yellow Rock Canyon Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 46,600 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `High Rock Canyon Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the High Rock Canyon Wilderness.

(8) Certain lands in the Calico Mountains Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 65,400 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `Calico Mountains Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the Calico Mountains Wilderness.

(9) Certain lands in the South Jackson Mountains Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 56,800 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `South Jackson Mountains Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the South Jackson Mountains Wilderness.

(10) Certain lands in the North Jackson Mountains Wilderness Study Area comprised of approximately 24,000 acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled `North Jackson Mountains Wilderness¹` and dated October 3, 2001, and which shall be known as the North Jackson Mountains Wilderness.

(b) ADMINISTRATION OF WILDERNESS AREAS- Subject to valid existing rights, each wilderness area designated by this Act shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act, except that any reference in such provisions to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of enactment of this Act and any reference to the Secretary of Agriculture shall be deemed to be a reference to the Secretary of the Interior.

(c) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION- As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a map and legal description of the wilderness areas designated under this Act. The map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in such map and legal description. Copies of the map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Bureau of Land

¹clerical correction

Management.

(d) GRAZING- Within the wilderness areas designated under subsection (a), the grazing of livestock, where established prior to the date of enactment of this Act, shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations, policies, and practices as the Secretary deems necessary, as long as such regulations, policies, and practices fully conform with and implement the intent of Congress regarding grazing in such areas as such intent is expressed in the Wilderness Act and section 101(f) of Public Law 101-628.

(e) HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING-

(1) IN GENERAL- Nothing in this Act diminishes the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada with respect to fish and wildlife management, including regulation of hunting and fishing on public land in the areas designated as wilderness under subsection (a).

(2) APPLICABLE LAW- Any action in the areas designated as wilderness under subsection (a) shall be consistent with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*).

(f) WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION- Nothing in this Act or the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*) precludes a Federal, State, or local agency from conducting wildland fire management operations (including prescribed burns) within the areas designated as wilderness under subsection (a), subject to any conditions that the Secretary considers appropriate.

(g) WILDERNESS STUDY RELEASE- Congress-

(1) finds that the parcels of land in the wilderness study areas referred to in subsection (a) that are not designated as wilderness in subsection (a) have been adequately studied for wilderness designation under section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782); and

(2) declares that those parcels are no longer subject to the requirement of subsection (c) of that section pertaining to the management of wilderness study areas in a manner that does not impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness.

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Passed the Senate October 5, 2000.

Passed the House of Representatives December 18, 2000

Signed by the President December 21, 2000

Amended November 6, 2001